

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Advisory Board**

### **5.7.09 Meeting minutes**

#### **BOS Meeting room**

##### **Present:**

John McCormack, Chairman  
Katie Chambers  
George Infanti  
Al Hicks  
Janet Langdell  
Mike Putnam  
Mel Reeve  
Tom Wilson

##### **Excused:**

Dave Roedel  
Tom Brennan

Bill Parker, Director Community Development/TIF Administrator  
Jim DeStefano, Grubb & Ellis/Coldstream RE  
Shirley Wilson, Recording secretary

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J. McCormack called the meeting to order at 7:30AM and introduced Mike Putnam, the new BOS representative.

#### **Review of Agenda & Minutes**

J. McCormack reviewed the agenda and highlighted sections of the previous meeting's minutes from November 20th. The TIFD group has not been completely dormant because a lot of the discussions of this committee have been built upon and further developed through the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) with overlapping representation from George, Mike, Bill, Shirley and myself and with presentations by Al and Jim. J. McCormack explained that there is a wide range of representation on the EDAC with the School Board, Conservation, TIFD, Water and Sewer Commissioners and Planning Board covering all the interested parties and is reflected in the diverse range of comments. He then gave a brief overview of the EDAC. B. Parker noted that the town wide survey to get more input from the community at large has not been pursued yet as the Planning Board is waiting for results to come out of the Economic Development Advisory Committee and what their next steps will be.

M. Putnam said the minutes mentioned that the water and sewer entrance fees for the property behind the 99 Restaurant were \$60,000. B. Parker said that certainly was a concern for the developer when they were trying to market the site, but the economy has stopped everything right now. B. Parker said we could have a discussion with the Water and Sewer Commissioners and the EDAC to be prepared for when the market turns around.

G. Infanti made a motion to accept the minutes as written. T. Wilson seconded and all in favor.

#### **Brox Property Marketing Update:**

J. DeStefano said their most recent activities have centered on working with Bill Parker and Meridian Land services regarding the conceptual engineering for developing this land. The good news is that this is a positive step to figure out the development capabilities. The candid news is that it will be a very expensive development with an estimate of just under \$2M to run infrastructure to phase I. For a 60,000SF industrial building, the infrastructure cost would calculate out to \$30.00/SF in addition to the cost of the land, the approvals and so on. This also front ends development to the remainder of the site. It is highly unlikely to see a private developer come and put the road system in without a user in place because there is plenty of competition in Southern New Hampshire. For example a 60,000 SF building

with infrastructure in place, located 2.5 miles from Manchester airport, in an established industrial park is going for \$14.00/SF for construction costs. Is there a way to get some revisions to the plans to show where a larger building of 80-100,000 SF or if a 200,000 SF building could go out there? Could someone put in combination industrial and residential apartments referencing Powers St? Is this area accessible enough for medical users such as CMC, Hitchcock, or Elliott hospitals who are all looking at satellite locations?

J. McCormack referenced the LandQuest proposal. B. Parker commented that since that time, the mixed use and workforce housing idea has taken hold. The Planning Board has been receptive to the EDAC recommendations to look zoning changes for an overlay district that would allow for mixed use and to look at that whole area including the Hawes property adjacent to Brox.

J. DeStefano added that several ideas came out of conversations with the Andover Development group. It may be time to get a re-quote on the Phase I \$250-\$300/linear ft infrastructure costs for road, gas, water and sewer. B. Parker said the original numbers were revised in 2006 and agreed that it may be time to get an update just to have it on hand. J. McCormack inquired if there was money in the budget to do that or where the money would come from. B. Parker replied that is always the question.

G. Infanti said he would be surprised if the costs had gone up in this economic downturn. What has not changed and has always been the concern is that we are sitting on raw land and without infrastructure this has got to be one of the toughest properties to market in New Hampshire. We're really back to the place we were ten years ago, we own the land but it is useless in this market with so many other choices out there. Further discussion on mixed use ensued.

J. DeStefano said it could take years to get to the back of the property so outside the box thinking may be needed to drive regional traffic to this relatively remote location like Hampshire Hills does. Maybe a correctional facility or an ATV park could be considered. Everyone is hoping to see development regarding the green movement to or utilities, but so far it is rare to see these companies coming out to buy land, build and employ people. GT Solar is looking for a warehouse space to store their products, there is a wind farm being discussed up north and it took ten years for AES, a cogeneration facility, to become a major tenant in Echo Park.

Candidly from a marketing standpoint, we don't think we're missing anyone. We are calling companies in the area and everyone is in a wait and see mode. The cold harsh reality is that everyone is in a holding pattern: however, Grub and Ellis economic indicators are encouraging.

A. Hicks asked if stimulus money was available. B. Parker explained that the money gets filtered down through the State but only appropriated through existing programs; it's not a certain amount that would go to miscellaneous infrastructure. The Water Utilities group put in some applications for their facility but they are still on the waiting list. The Town might get some money for the South Street project. Everybody's hopes were raised early on, but when word started coming down, the money was for very specific programs.

M. Putnam said from a Selectmen's standpoint he would be surprised if taxpayers were interested in housing out there. The Selectmen put together the Economic Development Advisory Committee in an effort to spread the tax base out and not put more of the burden on services. There may be too much onus being put on infrastructure at this point and maybe wells, septic and standby fire suppression systems would be OK until the Fire Department arrives. Once we've got a building or two out there, there might be enough incentive for taxpayers to see that we are moving forward with this. B. Parker said that may be an option to consider; just get the roads in and rely on well and septic. J. McCormack said the problem is that people want guarantees from developers, that the project will go through and

there will be payback. M. Putnam added that there is talk from the taxpayers asking if the town even wants to develop that property anymore. Maybe the question needs to be put on the ballot again. B. Parker said one of the reasons the EDAC was formed was to see if it is still worthwhile to develop the Brox property and hopefully that group will advocate keeping it as a potentially viable commercial/industrial site.

T. Wilson asked if the wetlands had grown. B. Parker said we had the wetlands looked at a year ago and in our area they didn't appear to grow; however, the plans were surveyed by different wetland scientists. T. Wilson said the cost of the infrastructure is cheaper now, but by the time the demand warrants the work, the economy will swing back the other way again and the costs will be up to \$2.5M again.

M. Reeve said he didn't think an independent outfit would be spending money these days and the only way to get infrastructure out at the Brox property would be for town to do the work, but there is reluctance.

Katie chambers said it seems everybody agrees that developers won't fund that much infrastructure and it will probably fall to the town. So what about a plan to do segments of the road over a three to five year period that could go before the voters? Then we would be asking the people and we would have plan for developers. Although plans tend to fail several times even when they ultimately succeed, persistence is the key and this would be a positive action. A. Hicks said the \$2.5M included the road all the way in and the utilities. B. Parker said that the last proposal to the voters took the road just to the north side and agreed that getting something together for just the road would be a great first step. J. DeStefano said a commitment from the town to put the road in or to partner up with a developer for the infrastructure costs especially up to the cul-de-sac for Phase I along with the internal support could bring a higher level of dialogue. A. Hicks added that CHA Clough-Harbor Associates has all the details for the road, water and sewer by the foot, and the required pumping stations.

B. Parker said we have spent the \$3,000 appropriation from MIDC on this latest engineering and discussion on MIDC's budget followed.

B. Parker said copies of the EDAC report will be distributed to the TIF Board and he invited the TIF group to attend the presentation to the Board of Selectmen. J. McCormack said we will share communication.

#### **Economic development Update:**

J. McCormack there has been much discussion in the EDAC meetings to attract new businesses but said it is also important to support and maintain contact with existing business. In terms of a marketing initiative it is ten times better to keep a business than to find a new one and referenced the relationship with Hendrix. In that same vein, Bill Parker, Guy Scaife, Tim Finan and I visited Hitchiner Mfg, toured their facility and discussed some of the challenges that they are facing. Hitchiner is in the casting business tied to the automobile and aerospace industries, both affected by the downturn. The Mexico ferrous plant let about half of their workforce go and the New Hampshire facilities are down to a couple hundred employees. It was important to get a feel for what could be done to help them and we had good dialogue that was very much appreciated by the Hitchiner folks. John Morrison, the president, was open and forthcoming about recycling and disposal and referenced the possibility of lower energy costs with a biomass facility at the Brox site. We should make a resolution to visit more businesses and keep in touch with local companies.

#### **Development Update:**

B. Parker said there are many small things going on; existing businesses coming in for additions and expansions and one ten lot subdivision going through the process. This month's Planning Board agenda

is a little busier with Fuller Oil redoing their site on Cottage St and a conceptual workforce housing plan for the large parcel behind the proposed 99 Restaurant on Nashua St that could have an uphill battle with that site being valuable commercial land and having to prove hardship to obtain a variance.

M. Reeve asked how long the town has owned the Brox Property. Bill Parker replied nine years.

**Other business:**

**Membership**

B. Parker said that Katie Chambers should be formally recommended for membership on this Board as the School Board representative. She filled Mike Trojano's position and that term was up in March so the Selectmen will need to officially appoint her to the TIFD Board.

G. Infanti made the motion and all were in approval. Discussion on all the membership terms followed.

• **Next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday August 27th at 7:30 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25AM.

**To do items:**

- ⇒ Brox Phase I infrastructure cost update
- ⇒ Economic Development update
- ⇒ Distribute the EDAC report
- ⇒ Appointment of Katie Chambers

**Continuing items:**

- ⇒ Website
- ⇒ Meet with local businesses
- ⇒ Education and exposure
- ⇒ Maintain an on-going progress file.
- ⇒ Continuous revisions/updates to the Economic Development Self Assessment survey
- ⇒ Vacant lands inventory